

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 189453

FOLLOWING REPEAT CARACAS 8381 ACTION SECSTATE USUN 27 AUG

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 8381

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: UN, RQ, PFOR, VE

SUBJ: PUERTO RICO AND VENEZUELA IN UN COMMITTEE OF 24

REF: A) CARACAS 2956 B) CARACAS 3254

1. PUERTO RICAN RESIDENT COMMISSIONER IN WASHINGTON AND NON-VOTING MEMBER OF CONGRESS JAIME BENITEZ CALLED ON CHARGE AUGUST 27 TO DESCRIBE MEETING HE HAD HAD WITH PRESIDENT PEREZ OF VENEZUELA AUGUST 26. BENITEZ SAID THAT IN HIS 45-MINUTE CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT HE HAD GIVEN SOME BACKGROUND ON PUERTO RICO'S PROBLEM IN UN COMMITTEE OF 24 WHERE AGITATION OF THE INDEPENDENTISTAS AND THEIR SUPPORTERS HAS CUSTOMARILY PRODUCED BIG HEADLINES AND DIFFICULT PROBLEMS FOR THE GOVERNMENT IN PUERTO RICO.

2. BENITEZ SAID HE TOLD THE PRESIDENT THAT HE WAS NOT TRYING TO PERSUADE VENEZUELA TO BE A PUBLIC CHAMPION OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF PUERTO RICO, BUT HE WOULD REMIND THE GOV THAT REALIZATION OF INDEPENDENTISTA AIMS IN PUERTO RICO WOULD MEAN THE IMPOSITION
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OF A DICTATORSHIP OF 5 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION

OVER THE REMAINING 95PERCENT. HE TOLD THE PRESIDENT THAT HE HOPED THE GOV WOULD BE ALERT TO THE RISKS TO THE FREEDOM WHICH THE PUERTO RICAN PEOPLE NOW ENJOY WHICH COULD COME FROM DEMAGOGIC SUCCESSES IN THE UN COMMITTEE OF 24.

3. BENITEZ SAID THAT PRESIDENT PEREZ LISTENED WITH INTEREST AND SYMPATHY, AND SAID HE WOULD TAKE UP THE MATTER DIRECTLY WITH THE VENEZUELAN REPRESENTATIVES CONCERNED.

4. BENITEZ THOUGHT IT LIKELY THAT PRESIDENT PEREZ AND SENIOR A.D. LEADERS HAVE BEEN UNAWARE OF THE EXTENT OF THE PROBLEM CREATED BY ATTITUDES AND ACTIONS OF VENEZUELAN REPRESENTATIVES IN THE COMMITTEE OF 24.

5. OSTENSIBLY HERE ON EDUCATION MATTERS, BENITEZ HAS BEEN IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH HIS OLD FRIEND EDUCATION MINISTER PENALVER, WHO HAS ARRANGED APPOINTMENTS FOR HIM TO SEE FOREIGN MINISTER SCHACHT TODAY AND SENATE PRESIDENT AND A.D. LEADER GONZALEZ BARRIOS TOMORROW, AUGUST 28.

6. COMMENT: FROM BENITEZ'S ACCOUNT, IT APPEARS THAT HIS CONSULTATION WITH PRESIDENT PEREZ WAS VERY USEFUL AND THAT TOGETHER WITH HIS FURTHER CONTACTS WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER AND A.D. LEADERSHIP MAY ACCOMPLISH MUCH OF WHAT WE HAD HOPED FOR IN RECOMMENDING THAT PUERTO RICAN LEADERS BRING DIRECT INFLUENCE TO BEAR ON GOV ON THE UN COMMITTEE OF 24 PROBLEM.
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